



Mayor Michael B. Coleman

# HR CONNECTIONS

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

QUARTERLY

Extra, Extra Read All About It

## HR WEBSITES:

Be sure to visit the Human Resources Internet and Intranet site for the latest information on training opportunities, EEO, Labor Relations, Employee Benefits/Risk Mgmt, and Employee Resources

(Internet)  
www.cityofcolumbus.org

(Intranet)  
Http://intranet/Agencies  
Human Resources

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## Did You Know?

The Citywide Office of Training and Development is looking for software Instructors. See page 3.

## A Message from the Director:

Welcome to the September 2002 edition of H.R. Connections!

In an environment of declining fiscal resources and elevated customer service delivery expectations, we are challenged each day throughout our respective departments to find ways to achieve greater efficiencies and reduce costs. Additionally, as public servants we are obligated to be good and accountable stewards of the fiscal resources available to us by seeking out the most innovative and efficient ways to deliver quality services to our customers.



Changes in economic conditions, technological advances, the changing demographics of today's workforce, stiff competition in a variety of service delivery areas, just to name a few, are reasons we can ill afford to continue to conduct business as usual. We must take full advantage of and maximize the technological resources and all other efficiency enhancing resources at our disposal.

To be the BEST we must adopt BEST practices, recruit, hire and retain the BEST employees, and put forth our BEST effort to continually review, analyze and improve our methods of service delivery.

Mayor Coleman, Council President Habash and the leadership of the respective unions are to be commended for their vision, leadership and support of the effort to establish Labor-Management Partnerships to develop and implement cost saving initiatives. The City has experienced a decline in the growth rate of general fund revenues. Getting the job done with fewer resources can place a tremendous strain upon labor and management. However, it has been proven that many organizations (public sector as well as private sector) that are successful in doing more with less have done so through labor and management partnerships.

Employees are the lifeblood of every organization and by far an organization's best asset. Motivated and involved employees devise the smartest cost cutting measures, the most efficient processes and the best customer service. It is imperative that we tap into this valuable resource through labor management partnerships currently being developed in departments citywide. This initiative is vital to the City's continued successful growth and development as a model 21<sup>st</sup> century city. While it cannot be achieved overnight there must be a change in the culture of how we do business. Cost savings and greater efficiencies will be an automatic by product of the change. Let's continue to work together to make this vision a reality.

Chester C. Christie, Director, Human Resources

## September 11 Remembered



Mayor Michael B. Coleman and city dignitaries (left) assembled at City Hall on Sept. 11, 2002 for "A Time to Remember, Reflect and Recommit," a ceremony commemorating the victims of the 9-11 tragedy. The program culminated with the installation of the Columbus Way Pledge. ( Right) Columbus Police Officers paused along High Street for a moment of silence during the day's events. **Photos by Scot Lacy.**

### Construction Inspectors & Staff in Transportation Celebrate One Year Without a Single Lost Workday Injury

On September 3, Construction Inspectors, office staff and the Safety Office in the Division of Transportation celebrated. The reason for the celebration: The 1800 East 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue location, has not had a single lost workday injury in more than one year. Brett Gillilan, with the Bureau of Workers' Compensation, Rick Brewer, the City Safety Manager and Dana Liming, with the City's Risk Management Group were guest speakers for the celebration. "This represents a daily, ongoing commitment by over a hundred construction inspectors and staff making wise safety decisions both in the office as well as on hundreds of construction sites throughout the city and state," said Tracy Thompson Safety Program Technician. "This also represents well over 218,000 hours of real teamwork and dedication and is a very impressive milestone for any group, public or private, to achieve."

Thompson said he believes that this accomplishment will be contagious throughout the City of Columbus. "We simply try to continually show our associates all of the real benefits to themselves, their families, the public and their co-workers of choosing to work safely in every situation both on and off the job and it really is paying off," he said.

Thompson said the team's next goal is to go two years without a lost workday injury.

**Congratulations to all of the associates of the Transportation Division located at 1800 East 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue!**

#### NEW RISK MANAGER

Midge Slemmer joined the Department of Human Resources on August 12th as the Employee Benefits and Risk Manager. Midge has 20 years experience in customer relations including 13 years focused in the healthcare and insurance industry. She has a bachelors degree in Finance from Franklin University. Midge lives in Upper Arlington with her husband and two children.

## CITYWIDE TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

The Office of Citywide Training and Development is currently offering Driver Improvement training titled "But I'm A Good Driver...." to all City employees who operate City owned automobiles. Classes are available throughout September. Get up to the minute driver training, air bag information, antilock braking systems, child restraints and substance abuse. A financial benefit to attending this program is that many insurance companies offer premium discounts to participants of the program. Please call 645-7744 with questions.



Congratulations to the following employees who recently received Microsoft certification: Bill Tippery, Public Utilities - Outlook, Excel, and PowerPoint; Tim Gardner, Recreation and Parks – Outlook; Sarah Chaney, DoT –PowerPoint; Kim Smith, DoT – Outlook; Jerry Edwards, Recreation and Parks – Access; and Becky Rinehart, Recreation and Parks - Word, Outlook, and PowerPoint.

**The Citywide Office of Training and Development is currently looking for more instructors. If you are highly skilled in a software application and would like to teach 4-6 times per year, discuss the opportunity with your supervisor and contact Citywide Training at 645-7242.**

### COMBINED CHARITIES CAMPAIGN RESULTS FOR 2001

Auditor's Office	1,012
City Attorney's Office	23,266
City Council	4,816
Civil Service Commission	3,707
EBOCO	1,913
Finance Department	4,233
Health Department	20,199
Human Resources	4,796
Income Tax	5,543
Mayor	3,487
Municipal Clerk of Courts	7,016
Office of Education	923
Public Safety-Administration	7,308
Public Safety-Communications	2,106
Public Safety-Division of Fire	36,246
Public Safety-Division of Police	13,807

Public Service-Administration	3,712
Public Service-Construction Inspection	3,742
Public Service-Engineering & Construction	10,537
Public Service-Facilities Management	2,238
Public Service-Fleet Management	2,113
Public Service-Refuse	4,648
Public Service-Traffic/Engineering	4,314
Public Utilities-Administration	2,833
Public Utilities-Electricity	3,225
Public Utilities-Sewers/Drains	11,010
Public Utilities-Water	10,414
Recreation & Parks	32,045
Technology Department	9,935
Trade & Development	20,049
Treasurer's Office	1,210

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$262,403</b>
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Join this year's campaign chair, Chester C. Christie, Director of Human Resources and Co-Chair William A. Capretta, President, Fraternal Order of Police Capital City Lodge 9, to help raise money for numerous worthwhile causes. This year's campaign for the City of Columbus will run from September 16 through October 31, 2002.

## **EEO: RECENT SUPREME COURT DECISIONS ON HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT AND ADA**

Those familiar with EEO procedures know Title VII states that employees can only file charges of discrimination within 300 calendar days of the alleged discriminatory act in states like Ohio, that has an agency (Ohio Civil Rights Commission) that accepts charges of discrimination.

The U. S. Supreme Court recently recognized an exception to Title VII's limitation on the time in which discrimination charges must be filed. They declared that where an employee alleges he or she has been subjected to a hostile work environment, if an act occurs within the 300-day time period, a court can now consider and allow into evidence all acts that may have contributed to creating the hostile work environment. The Court distinguished between "discrete discriminatory acts" (wrongful termination, failure to promote, denial of transfer and refusal to hire, etc.) which may constitute a separate "unlawful employment practice" on which a lawsuit can be based and continuing acts of harassment. Charges of discrimination based upon a discrete act of discrimination must still be filed with a compliance agency within the 300-day limit. On the other hand, the Court explained that a hostile work environment charge of discrimination can extend back to include the time period beyond the 300 days preceding the filing of the charges. The Supreme Court decision should motivate us - whether a member of management or an employee - to be vigilant in ensuring that any form of harassment, whether based on age, race, sex, color, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, or disability is not occurring and is not being tolerated in the City workforce.

The second Supreme Court decision of note involved the Court finding that an employer may refuse to hire an applicant for employment where the state of the applicant's health would place him or her at serious risk of injury or illness. The Court pointed out that requiring an employer to hire an applicant with a serious health problem could also put the employer in peril of violating the Occupational Safety and Health Act, which requires employers to ensure the safety of every worker. Thus, it can be seen that the Court continues to carve out major exceptions to the Americans with Disabilities Act. Stay tuned for further clarification of the ADA by the Supreme Court. (Summaries based upon the Supreme Court cases: National Railroad Passenger Corp. v. Morgan, U.S. Supreme Court, No. 00-1614 (2002); Chevron U.S.A. v. Echazabal, U.S. Supreme Court, No. 00-1406 (2002).)

### **EMPLOYEE BENEFITS**

A City employee on an approved leave of absence who fails to return to work after 90 days of an approved leave, is eligible to apply for a continuation of individual life insurance through a conversion policy. Also, employees that are retiring or terminating employment from the City can apply for a conversion policy. The employee must contact his/her Division Payroll office, Risk Management or CNA life insurance and pay the individual life insurance premium within 31 days of termination from the City. Please contact your Division Payroll office or Risk Management at 645-6010 with questions.

### **IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS**

United HealthCare.....1-800-681-3849  
 Medical, Rx Drug, Pre-certification  
 Mail Order Rx Drug.....1-800-681-3849  
 Nurseline.....1-877-365-7922  
 Anthem Blue Cross/Blue Shield .....1-800-282-1730  
 Vision Service Plan .....1-800-877-7195

CNA Life Insurance  
 Life: At work employees contact Division Payroll Department.  
 Terminating employees, call Risk Management to convert  
 within 31 days of terminating City employment

CobraServ.....1-800-790-9056  
 COBRA: Continuation Benefits  
 CareWorks.....1-888-899-1232  
 Workers' Compensation Managed Care Organization  
 Anthem Life  
 Short term disability. Complete forms through Division payroll.  
 AFLAC.....614-761-1342  
 Pre-tax benefits. Dependent child care  
 Colonial Life.....614-882-9307  
 Voluntary insurance options  
 Employee Benefits/Risk Management.....614-645-8065  
 Deferred Compensation.....1-877-644-6457  
 Citywide Training Hotline.....614-645-7733

### **Ohio Public Employees Deferred Compensation Program**

**Please update your records to  
show the new telephone  
numbers for Deferred  
Compensation as  
1-877-OHIO457  
or  
1-877-644-6457  
The Internet website  
address is:  
www.ohio457.org**

### **HR Connections brought to you by**

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